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Henrico Health Department's Newsletter

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Communicable Diseases Update



Increase in corneal infections 2004 – present: The CDC is investigating an increase in the number of culture-confirmed *Acanthamoeba*

keratitis cases reported among U.S. ophthalmology practices since 2004. Please report cases that were diagnosed since January 1, 2005 to Henrico Health Department (804-501-4522).

Norovirus Outbreak this Season: Lessons Learned (and still learning!) Henrico Health Department is in the process of documenting the lessons learned from this norovirus season (10/2006 to present). Best practices identified from these lessons could help serve as a model for managing large scale health emergencies such as pandemic influenza. If you have input, please call us at 501-4522 or email

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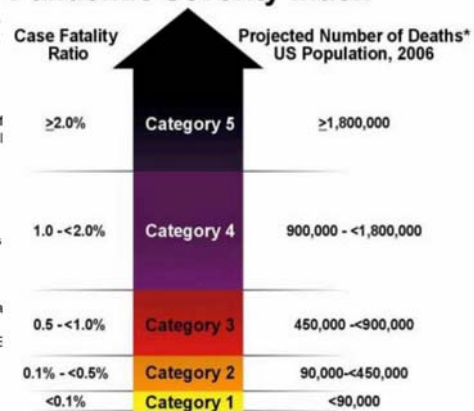
Pandemic Flu/Avian Flu PANDEMIC ALERT PHASE: 3

Pandemic/Avian Flu Update: Human Cases –New human H5N1 infections were reported in March 2007 by Egypt (6) and Laos (1). The overall 2003-2007 case fatality rate remains stable at approximately 60% (169 of 284). The newest H5N1 cases occurred in females aged 3, 6, 10, and 42 years and males aged 2, 4 and 5 years. Three of Egypt's cases occurred in the Aswan province, but are not epidemiologically linked.

Lessons from 1918- Most H5N1 influenza deaths have occurred in persons less than 40 years, similar to the 1918 pandemic strain that tended to kill the young and healthy. One explanation may be a “cytokine storm,” or the release of excessive immune system proteins that harm the patient. However, it is not yet known whether the young are affected more because they are more susceptible to H5N1 or because they have more contact with infected birds.

See: <http://www.nih.gov/news/pr/feb2007/niaid-28.htm>

Pandemic Severity Index



* Assumes 30% illness rate

Pandemic Severity Index- If H5N1 ever moves to Phase 6 on the WHO alert scale to become a “Pandemic,” the US may use this scale (at left) called the Pandemic Severity Index (PSI) to communicate the immediacy of the situation.

Seasonal Influenza Corner

Virginia 2006/2007 flu Surveillance

Activity Level: **Widespread** (as of 3/27/2007)

<http://www.vdh.state.va.us/Epidemiology/Surveillance/Influenza/>

CDC flu surveillance at: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>

Prevention/Training Updates

- 1) The **Virginia School Entrance Health Form** (MCH-213F) has just been updated. Forms, directions and ordering instructions are available at: <http://www.vahealth.org/schoolhealth/publications.asp>
- 2) The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) released recommendations for **Quadrivalent Human Papillomavirus Vaccine** on 3/23/07. See: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5602.pdf>
- 3) VDH has new printable **poison prevention** resources available for your patients, including printable tip cards, at <http://www.vahealth.org/civp/Topics/poisonpreventionweek.asp>
- 4) The **USPSTF** recommends against the routine use of aspirin and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) to prevent colorectal cancer in individuals at average risk for colorectal cancer. See: <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/uspstf/uspssasco.htm>
- 5) **MRSA: A Changing Culture** is a conference being held on May 18th in Richmond. Contact VDH Office of Epidemiology at 864-8141 for further information.

Emergency Preparedness

Pandemic Influenza: Healthcare providers and facilities are reminded to continue working on their pandemic influenza plans in the context of “all hazards” planning. A generic plan template has been posted at www.publichealthbytes.org to assist organizations and businesses of any type to develop their plans.

Medical Reserve Corps (MRC): The Henrico MRC continues to seek new volunteers. You can join on-line or attend one of our upcoming orientation sessions (3/29, 4/26, 3/31). Call 501-4643 or visit <http://www.co.henrico.va.us/health/mrc.htm> for more information.

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